

IMAMU AMEER BARAKA
(leroi jones)

A R T

Out of the dull, cold, browns and greys of an urban ghetto called Newark, Moved Art Williams, a friend, a brother, a restless spirit winding up through the otherwise static blankness of this town.

Art brought some life to Newark. He had the spirit of music, and color, about him. And he tried to translate it for all of us. He tried to give it a home, here in a place nobody thought would be fertile for music and color.

All Art Williams' life he thought about beautiful things. He tried, in every way he could understand, to bring some kind of beauty into the world. Into his world, and into all of our worlds, if we were conscious.

Art was the archetype of the ancient hipster, a man for all seasons, drawing his knowledge from the city streets, and translating everything into striking rhythms.

He brought us The Cellar, on Shipman Street, right amongst the incredible wasteland of a corrupt city, he created a place where poetry, music, dance, painting, acting, the beginning of a new humanity, could come to exist. And those of us who returned to this city after weird journeys across the world in search of that same new humanity, when we did return came back first to him, to his beautiful cellar, where life could be created again

IMAMU AMEER BARAKA

(leroi jones)

2

For many of us young people then, the mid 60's, the cellar was the only place where real human beings could be found. We created, in the celar, we met our future wives, we readied ourselves for that uncertain future, and Art moved around like the timeless Brother-Father of the place.

Now, we think he is gone. But there is no such thing as death. There are only dead ideas, and people in bondage to dead ideas. Art Williams has moved on to grounds more fertile for his understanding of sound and color. He has taken another form, just as we all will. There in nothing certain in the world, except change.

And here in Newark, we are moving to create a New Ark, and to bring the sound, and color, and poetry, and humanity, Art Williams protected with his life in that cellar of our youth, out into the day. We are trying to make this whole city into something Art, the eternal hipster-diety would be in love with. To bring that beauty up out of the cellar, so that all the people can appreciate the wonderful ideas that animate men like Arthur Williams.

You see there is a little of Arthur Williams in all of us, in any of us who have ever patted our feet to cool sounds, or nodded our head, or could be made ecstatic by the creations of men and God. Let us be thankful we knew him, and hope that this knowledge will let us bring out a little heavier that bit of him that is in us, tho we understand too well, that he was the only one who was completely ART.

05-81-5

05-81-8